1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

quantities regularly in certain spots along the coast. These eggs are greatly relished by the natives.[8]

Kinship Customs

The enlargement of a Murngin's economic behavior is dependent on two factors: (1) the horde; and (2) certain reciprocals in the kinship structure. All the relatives of a Murngin ordinarily exchange gifts with him, but certain kinship personalities do this much more than others. The mother's brother—sister's son relationship has been seized upon as the mechanism for enlarging the economic life of a Murngin man. "Far-off" wakus and gawels are sought by a man, distant not only socially but geographically; the greater distance a man has between him and a trading waku or gawel, the greater pride he exhibits when displaying articles sent or brought to him by his relative, and the greater satisfaction he feels when sending or returning gifts. (See chapter on kinship, page 95.)

The mari-kutara relationship is much the same, except that there is a tendency to indulge in ritual gifts much more than in those from the ordinary material culture. The feathered string which has been the decorative covering of the totemic poles is sent by mari or kutara to the other. This exchange of ritual goods plays a prominent part in the economic life of the people, since if a mari receives a gift from kutara he must, in a not too great period of time, return a present of like ritual value. The finely turned string, often used as ritual string, is usually made by women, at times hundreds of feet of it. It is generously covered with birds' feathers and used on one of the larger totem poles. Obviously a great amount of work on the part of the women and the killing of a large number of birds is required to meet the needs of ritual exchange. Only the red feathers from the breasts

[8] The people of the various areas, particularly those west and east of the Goyder, are always accusing each other of cannibalism. The author can vouch that no cannibals are present among the peoples east of the Goyder and roughly in the Murngin area. The Murngin tell a number of stories of the people south of Cape Stewart which to them prove the existence of cannibalism there. Some of them claim they have seen men's baskets filled with meat which was neither kangaroo nor dunong and which they were convinced was human flesh. In one account I collected, the narrator described watching a cannibal feast. The victim, a large man, was carved and prepared for cooking. There is much scornful joking among the Murngin about these people to the west of them. When they think they see human flesh in the basket of one of these people they say, "Ah, what is this one?" and another Murngin replies, "Oh, that's a kangaroo," with a sarcastic inflection in his voice. The other one says, "Yes, but it doesn't smell just like kangaroo," to which the reply is made, "Oh, well, maybe it's only a dead man."

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

283 237 431 of the red-breasted parrot can be used for certain totemic emblems. To collect a sufficient supply of red feathers to put on such totems as their fire, woman and other Dua moiety totemic emblems demands considerable industry not only on the part of the totem makers in their daily hunting and robbings of birds' nests but also in gift exchanges. This means that red ocher and other body paints, spear heads from the interior, carved wooden spears from the coastal belt, and other objects of economic value must be had to trade. Small white feathers from hawks' breasts and from the sulphur-crested cockatoo and the blue-eyed corella are also used for the string of many totems. The larger feathers of the cockatoos and the yellow crest of the sulphur-crested cockatoo are used for the great ritual headdresses made by the [314] men with the aid of adhesive gathered from the ironwood tree and the honeybee's hive. Ironwood resin makes a very hard, durable cement and is used for many purposes for which the beeswax is too malleable. [237] Ordinarily the beeswax is preferred for the molding of head pieces because the proper shapes can be more easily obtained.

431 602 Obviously the extension of the kinship personality of a man by the exchange of gifts between far-off relatives or the strengthening of the bonds between near kin such as mari and kutara definitely stimulates economic enterprise. More labor is necessary than if these mechanisms were not present. The goods themselves take on higher value from [178] their use in the totemic ceremonies; the totemic strings absorb some of the clan ceremonial power and, once used, are taboo to the uninitiated. They are of course valuable in another ritual since they will be used by the receiver for his own totemic emblem and then be passed on to other reciprocating relatives.

4. *Property*

423 Relating Murngin technological articles to human beings by the concept of ownership is one of the methods of controlling and regulating this society's adaptation to the natural environment, since it incorporates the various articles of technology into the general social order. The Murngin concepts of property are developed into a variety of forms according to the type of thing owned. Land is divided among [614] the clans; and definite areas and their natural objects such as trees, water holes, and the like are considered as belonging to these exogamic units. Derivatively the moieties are also supposed to have an "owning" 423 relationship to the land areas of the country. This means that not only 616 are spatial divisions organized by the separation of all things on the

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

may be possible that Malay influence brought the final elaboration which formed the gabled superstructure. The pile house is never used in the water and is found only on raised ground. The native explanation of why the more eastern parts of the Murngin country do not possess the mosquito house is that there are not so many mosquitoes here and the ordinary hut with the fire in front works better than the mosquito house. It is probably true, since the morasses of the Goyder and Glyde Rivers breed more mosquitoes than any other part of the country.

Another type of shelter found in the north is the stone cave dwelling. Dwellings of this type are used during the wet season in the lonely hill country in the interior, on Wessel Island, and sporadically around Buckingham Bay.

2. Articles That Are Worn

Although the nights of the dry season are at times quite cold, no clothing has been invented or borrowed by these people, as were kangaroo skin cloaks farther south.

It has been said that need does not produce invention, and the Australian black has been pictured as an example of this theory. Such criticism is colored by the prejudices of our own social standards. The days in Arnhem Land are always warm. No clothes are needed for comfort. The occasional cold nights are made comfortable by windbreaks and small fires built to produce ample warmth. In other words, instead of using one of our methods, the Australian has utilized a different invention to combat the cold. During the rainy season clothes are a hindrance rather than a help.

It has been asserted further that the black lacked the intelligence to invent clothes, since as soon as he came in contact with white civilization he donned the habiliments of Caucasian culture. He has, around white settlements where native civilization has disappeared, adopted the clothing of western civilization, but this is not so much an adoption by his own culture of an element of white civilization to meet his needs, as a more or less complete abandonment of his own material culture and his adoption of the white men as his master and the white men's culture as his own. The wearing of clothing has done more harm, destroyed more natives, made the aborigine far less adapted to his natural surroundings in the north, than has almost any other element of white culture. His naked condition before the coming of the white man was far more appropriate to the country he lived in.

String.—String is basic to most of the articles worn by the Murngin. All string, composed of only two strands, is made of vegetable or animal fiber: the inner bark of certain trees (the hibiscus, in particular), the inner bark of their roots, and opossum fur or human hair. The string of vegetable matter is usually fine and carefully twisted, while the other is loosely woven

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

283 and coarse in character. Occasionally, when there is no available supply of cord and it is necessary to tie a bundle, string is made by merely splitting bark into a few fine strips which are used without further treatment. The inner leaf of the pandanus is also used in an emergency, but two strands are first twisted together on the inner side of the leg. A cord of human hair is twisted with another string to make a large coarse twine, not only for added strength but because the larger size has a greater aesthetic value.

When vegetable fiber string is to be made, a Murngin, without the aid of a stick, starts digging at the base of a tree trunk until he has followed a large root out to where it branches into smaller ones. The diameter of these latter roots is about the size of a man's finger. They are broken loose and cut up into two-foot lengths and taken back to the camp.

A small shell is used to scrape off the outer bark. The root, with the inner bark still attached, is placed in the string-maker's mouth and bitten, so that several long straight lines perforate the inner bark from end to end, enabling the manufacturer to remove it in several long thin strips. After all the roots have had the same treatment, the strips are soaked in a small paper-bark receptacle of water for about half an hour. They are then put before a fire to dry until most of the moisture has evaporated, when they are deposited in a basket to remain there until the maker is ready to complete the operation, usually immediately. Two strands of the root fiber are held in one hand about an inch apart and rolled together on the inner side of the upper leg. This forms the raw, loose bark fiber into a small round strand. Another strand is made the same way. Then the hand is rubbed from the knee upward across the two strands, and a short piece of cord, about two-thirds the size of the maker's hand, is formed. The next piece of raw fiber is added to one end of the cord and the operation of rolling repeated. Except for the first addition, only one new piece of material is attached at a time, so that there will not be a weak spot at the same place in each strand of the two-ply cord.

[237] The small feathers or down of a cockatoo, jabiru, or other bird are rolled into the fiber string if it is to be used for decorative purposes, a ceremony, or a totemic emblem. The feather is first rubbed in the fingers to force the lateral fibers to project at right angles and evenly on both sides of the quills. Feathers are sometimes added at rhythmic intervals with the aid of beeswax.

302 283 Human hair string is manufactured by an entirely different technique. The natives save their hair when they cut it. It is usually two or three inches long, since both men and women in northeastern Arnhem Land do not wear the long hair seen in other parts of Australia. The cut hair is usually wadded into small loose balls, wrapped in paper bark, and kept at the bottom of a basket. The string is not made until a sufficient quantity has been gathered to form a cord several feet long.

283 A spindle eight to ten inches long, about one-eighth inch in diameter,

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

and with an inch-long hook at the end is used. Each small hair ball is rolled out with the fingers into loose strands a few inches in length. Two strands are attached to the spindle and are twisted together by rolling the spindle down the leg of the seated native. The opposite end of the string is twisted in the opposite direction by the operator's other hand. More material is added until the string is complete. Opossum fur string is made in the same manner.

Both men and women make the vegetable and animal fiber string, although there is a not entirely unconscious tendency for division of labor on the traditional basis of women working with vegetable material and men with animal. Since the ordinary vegetable fiber used is root bark, and the usual instrument for digging such material is the digging stick—a woman's implement—strong impetus to women's making vegetable fiber string and an indirect restraint to men's making it result. Occasionally men do make vegetable fiber string, but very rarely. Even when a man wishes to construct his totemic emblem for the great Narra ceremony he puts his wives to the task of making the string. They, of course, do not know for what purpose they are making it, although it is likely that the more astute women have something more than a vague suspicion. Both men and women manufacture human hair string, but men predominantly.

Vegetable fiber string is used in the manufacture of the following articles: (1) the trunk of totemic emblems; (2) tassels of fringe on totemic emblems (this latter string is usually feathered, and would always be if the native had the necessary birds' down or small feathers); (3) mesh of fishing nets; (4) women's carrying bags; (5) women's and children's "harness"; (6) men's and women's pubic covering; (7) the wrapping of the ends of hair belts; (8) the wrapping of one variety of armlet; (9) the decorative fringe for baskets or to outline the design on a man's basket; (10) ordinary tying purposes; (11) necklaces; (12) forehead bands; (13) spirit bags; and (14) hafting.

Human hair string is used in making the following things: (1) fringe on a totemic emblem, but not for wrapping one; (2) fringe on a man's basket or for forming a geometrical design upon it; (3) cord on a bull roarer; (4) hair string belts; (5) string to tie around the ailing member of the sick; and (6) the tassel on a cylindrical spear-thrower. It is not used for fishing nets, women's bags, in the manufacture of women's and children's "harness," for any decorative wrapping purposes; nor ever for wrapping a totemic emblem, since the Murngin are fond of paint for decoration and human hair string does not take paint as well as fiber string does.

Opossum fur string, much rarer than vegetable fiber or human hair string, is used for pendants of the totemic emblems and upon men's baskets. It is also the chief material in making both men's and women's pubic aprons, although sometimes pandanus fiber is used, and occasionally root bark fiber. Farther south and east of the Murngin, in the district that is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

now modern Queensland, this ratio is reversed and the chief material for pubic decorations or coverings is of vegetable fiber string.

Women's Food Bags.—The women's food bags (like the men's baskets) are so much a part of their ordinary equipment that the writer has placed them in the category of things worn. The natives think of them as such.

The bags are of two major types. The norm of one is around twenty-one inches in length and twelve inches in width, while the other has a norm of eighteen by eight inches. The mesh of the larger bag is usually about one-quarter inch in diameter; the smaller has a mesh of about an eighth to a sixteenth of an inch. Each has a handle of from two to eight strands of fiber string tied to the rim of the bag. The handle is made long enough (sixteen inches) to fit over the forehead of the woman and allow the bag to lie against her back just below the neck.

Two sticks are put in the ground some few inches apart, according to the size of the bag desired, and the basal strand placed around them. The woman squats or sits while weaving. She works from left to right on one side of the sticks, forming the loop-meshes across the basal strand.[1] The finished side is taken from the sticks and put on the opposite side of the stick, so that the weaver now continues working from left to right to finish the other side of the bag. The ends are then sewn together. The basal strand may be removed, but it frequently remains in the bag.

These bags are used by the women to transport cycad nuts, yams, larger lily bulbs, or any other vegetable or animal food brought to camp by them. Men do not use this type of container.

Rarely, to decorate the bags, bands of darker and lighter fiber string are alternated at intervals of about three-quarters of an inch.

Spirit Bags.—Throughout northeastern Arnhem Land the medicine men use a small bag made by the simple loop technique of the woman's food bag. Ordinarily the string used is extremely fine and the mesh about an eighth-inch in diameter. The bag itself is about four to six inches in diameter, and, when stuffed with native cord and tied at the top with vegetable fiber string, is round in shape. It is manufactured exactly as is a woman's food bag. A string handle about sixteen inches long is attached at its neck and worn as a head circlet so that the bag usually reposes over the ear. At times it is worn around the medicine man's neck.

The bag may be decorated with alternating bands of dark and light fiber, or it may have a series of geometrical designs in red, yellow, white, and black painted upon it. Frequently it is also covered with birds' down. At other times the whole bag is completely covered with red ocher, with

[1] "The circular basal strand is identical with the stirrup of the European netter, and is either fixed like it to some circular support or else held in position by passing the leg, big toe, etc., through it: it usually remains as it is, part and parcel of the manufactured article." W. E. Roth, *North Queensland Ethnological Bulletin*, Brisbane, 1901, No. 1, page 12.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

no other ornamentation upon it. The red ocher is not only for decoration, but it adds spirit "power" to the receptacle.

East of the Goyder River the bag is used exclusively by the medicine man, whose spirit helpers reside in it. West of the Goyder River it is also worn by anyone who so desires for good luck in hunting. Here also it is held in the teeth during a fight to add magical powers and bravery to the fighter.

Fighting "Tie."—Sometimes a "tie" is carried in the mouth to gain power during a fight. The tie is made by the same technique as the spirit bag. It is made of coarse vegetable fiber string, is flat, about eighteen inches long and three inches wide, and has a fiber string handle which allows the owner to wear it around his neck when not in use. It has ornamental value, although it is never decorated except with alternating bands of dark and light fiber.

The netting stitch is not used in the making of bags or the tie in this area as it is in Queensland.

Forehead Bands.—This article of ornamentation is made of small thread-like string with a mesh that is a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. Its length and width correspond to the size of the wearer's forehead. It is worn only by males. Each end of the band has a string attached to it for tying at the back of the head. The bands are used in the Gunabibi, Ulmark, and Djungguan ceremonies. They are covered with a solid layer of white pipe clay or red ocher. Sometimes bands are made of paper bark tied with fiber string and painted with red ocher or white clay.

Women's and Children's "Harness."—This curious body ornament used by women and small children looks, when worn, much like a harness used for hitching horses to a carriage. It is composed of one continuous strand of twelve to eighteen strings of two-ply vegetable fiber. The string is formed into two large equal loops which are joined by wrapping with fiber string for a distance of about ten inches. Each loop is then wrapped separately for from two to five inches from both sides of the joint. The wrapped sections are usually painted with alternating white and red or yellow and red bands of paint. The unwrapped string frequently is covered with red ocher.

Women and children wear the harness during ceremonies. The wrapped portion falls down the middle of the back; the arms are slipped through the loops which are made to cross below the breast.

Bugle-grass Necklace.—The bright straw-yellow bugle grass is cut into small beads about one-half inch in length and strung on a thin vegetable fiber string. The string is then looped back and forth to form about eighteen lengths of ten inches each. To each of the two ends of the bunch of loops is attached a single fiber string. The beads are worn against the throat by tying the fiber strings at the back of the wearer's neck. Men, women, and children wear these ornaments. The bright yellow is particularly effective in contrast with the gleaming black skin of the aborigines.

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

Paddles and clubs have many traits in common and are obviously under the same technical influences. 501

Anchors.—An anchor consists of a large stone tied to a twelve to eighteen foot turtle rope, attached to the stern of a canoe. The canoe, with the aid of the stone anchor, can then be left near the water so that at low tide it is beached and at high tide it is floating but held from being carried to sea. This comparatively simple invention seems rudimentary and without significance, but a more careful analysis of its function shows it to be quite important. In the first place, instead of a man being forced to watch the tide and to hold the canoe during high tide, or beach it after considerable labor, this simple invention is substituted for him; or, to state it in another way, it takes the place of a man's hands, and is, therefore, one more projection of man's body into his culture through his tools. If the canoe is beached beyond high tide, the labor of several men is required both for taking it out of the water and putting it back again. The anchor acts as a labor-saving device.

5. Tools Used for Gathering Sea Food

Turtle Harpoon.—The turtle harpoon is a modification of the ordinary spear. Its shaft is about fifteen feet long and its diameter is much more than that of the usual spear shaft. The handle section has the usual smooth socket for the articulation of the spear-thrower, but the distal section is constructed entirely differently from that of the ordinary wooden or stone-headed spear. A socket several inches deep is bored into the far end of the shaft; this is used to keep in place the iron prong attached to the turtle rope. When the harpoon has been driven into the back of the turtle, dugong, or other sea animal, the prong comes loose from the shaft. 411

Harpoon Rope.—The rope for deep-sea harpooning and for anchoring a dugout canoe is made of the inner bark of the hibiscus. Unlike the two-ply string, it is composed of three strands. Each strand has a large number of fibers in it and the rope is about five-eighths of an inch in diameter. The harpoon rope is ordinarily about sixty to seventy feet long. It can be spliced by turning back the ends of the two pieces which are to be connected and interlocking the two loops. The strands of each end are then woven into the rope and wrapped with cord. A minimum of four people is necessary to manufacture a harpoon rope. It is never made by women. Whether three-ply rope is a Malay intrusion, a diffused technique from Papua or Melanesia, or invented by the Australian natives, cannot be proved. The fact that it is closely associated with the dugout canoe seems to suggest the Malay hypothesis, since the dugout in the western Arafura Sea is a Malay contribution to this civilization, and since the dugout carried with it the sail and the mast and the anchor rope as part of its complex. 411 283 [177]

Fish Nets.—Fish nets are made not by the loop method but with the ordi- 286

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Murngin OI17

*532
*773
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represent rocks, the light ones the sea breaking over them. In panel *b* the bands have a similar meaning, the darker being large rocks under which the turtles shelter, and the lighter ones the breaking waves.

The Spirit People, Balu-balu

Two *dua* spirit people, or *Mokoi*, a man and his sister, called the *Balu-balu*, once lived on Bungara Island, which is situated between Woodah Island and the shores of Blue Mud Bay.[17] One day, when the man was out in his canoe, called *Baratja*,[18] he saw a particularly large fish but, being over-anxious, did not take sufficient care and the fish escaped. He returned to camp and told his sister about his misfortunes. She sympathized with him and suggested that, perhaps, if next time they both went out in the canoe they might have better luck, and so it happened, for they caught a *dua* green turtle, *gariwa*. Putting the turtle into their canoe, they took it with them to Purelko, the *dua* home of the dead, where they cooked and ate it in the company of other *Mokoi*.

As their turtle rope was becoming rotten the *Balu-balu* decided to make a new one.[19] The woman collected and shredded a large quantity of bark which the man twisted into a rope. When finished it was so long that when one end was at Purelko the other reached Bungara Island. Since that time the brother and sister set out every morning for Bungara Island to catch a *dua* turtle and take it back to Purelko to be cooked and shared with the other *Mokoi*.

Although the aborigines claim they have often seen the marks of the *Balu-balu's* canoe on the shore at Bungara Island, none has ever seen these spirit people.

Plate 111E, F shows the obverse and reverse side of the paddle.

On panel *a* of E is a group of sea-urchins, *jatin*, the food of the green turtles, *gariwa*. The spirit canoe, *Baratja*, of the *Balu-balu*, is in panel *b*. Within the canoe is the green turtle the *Mokoi* are taking to Purelko. Below the canoe is another turtle and, on either side, two harmless *dua* sea snakes, called *jalu*.

The reverse side, F, panel *b*, is occupied by a green turtle and two *jalu* snakes. In panel *a* is another *dua* turtle, two sea snakes and some sea-urchins.

The Dua Totem Creatures of Melville Bay

When the dolphins *injipana* and *bulaubir* were men, they shifted their camp from Arnhem Bay to Waupili, at Melville Bay, to be present at a ceremony in which all the green-turtle and dolphin men took part. Whilst this was going on a *Mokoi*, on his way to Purelko, speared one of the participants, called *Madapang*. This attack gave everyone such a fright that both the dolphin and the turtle men went into the water and became sea creatures. The body of the

17. Map, Fig. 4.

18. The spirits of the *jirija* 'heaven' also have a special name for the canoe in which they catch dugong at Cape Arnhem, p. 346.

19. Turtle rope is made from twisted strands of bark; Tindale (1958), p. 115, describes the method of manufacture.

[283]

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
OI17 Murngin OI17

either for good or ill. Thus there are found few natural leaders among these people, a man's individuality being submerged in the life of his horde or tribe. This same fact, coupled with the extreme isolation in which this race has for centuries lived, has also served to stultify progress. 157 182 [614]

Only by a man of exceptionally forceful character could reforms be instituted, and life has consequently gone on practically unchanged for countless generations. 178

Toward those whose friendship has been proved these aborigines show a splendid spirit of loyalty. Those who treat them in a fair and friendly fashion will receive fair dealing and devoted friendship in return. 577

Arts and Crafts

The weapons and utensils used throughout this area correspond to the usual aboriginal type, but include a number of local variations. Little use is made of any weapon other than the spear, though clubs of several types are used to a limited extent, as also are boomerangs. 411

There are many varieties of wooden spears, barbed and unbarbed, some of which have the head and the haft fashioned out of a single piece of hardwood in a very remarkable way. Flaked stone spear-heads are much used, particularly for fighting, and these heads are traded over wide distances. [438]

The use of iron, particularly for spear-heads and cutting implements, has been known for many decades, this material being obtained in limited quantities from the old traders from Macassar. Only boomerangs of a heavy type are used, and these are by no means common. The light, return boomerang is unknown, as is also the shield. 177 411 439

Many types of "dilly-bag" are made, some of which are of such fine texture as to retain water. Others are highly decorated with feathers or fur woven in during manufacture. The material used in most cases is the split leaf of the pandanus palm. Other bags are made of string knotted very neatly and evenly in an open mesh. Fish nets are also constructed in the same way. 415 [285] [286]

Excellent string is manufactured from bark fibre, grass, fur, and human hair, and is used for a wide variety of purposes. Much of it designed for ceremonial purposes is decorated with feathers interwoven during spinning. Strong rope is made of bark fibre or grass, and used in the harpooning of turtle, dugong, or porpoise, and for the mooring of canoes. 283

222 484 Even when they are making for a definite camping ground, aborigines very rarely travel in a straight line. Instead, the journey is made slowly, with deviations to favoured localities which are likely to yield food or game, so that they can hunt as they go. The women and children search for vegetable food as they travel, pausing at intervals to dig yams or other roots, which are put in a "dilly bag" or basket (*bäti*) carried for the purpose. Meanwhile the men are on the lookout for sugar bag (wild honey), opossums, bandicoots (*Isoodon*), native cats (*Dasyurus*), as well as snakes and goannas (*Varanus*) or any other game which they can find. On these journeys nothing comes amiss, and in addition to the quest for food, both men and women pause to gather any materials of use in technological [314] processes, which they may see. The young branches of such [283] trees as *bulgut*, (*Brachychiton paradoxum*), which form an important source of the fibre used for making string, are cut, the bast fibre stripped and tied neatly or rolled up, to be put into their dilly bags for later use. When a "sugar bag" or wild bees' nest is found the honey and even the bee bread is eaten on the spot, unless there is a large [415] amount, when it is carried in a bark trough or a closely [237] woven basket of special type called *timbuka*. The soft black wax is roughly moulded into a ball and carried in this form, to be cleaned and refined later, and used for the mounting of certain spear heads, particularly for *ŋämbi* and *kaiyit* (flint and iron respectively).

[221] 222 512 When the vegetable harvest is at its height, about the middle of the south-east season, and the people are living chiefly on a single staple food which can be harvested readily in one place, the women generally go out in a body. [476] But at such times, although they work close together, there IS NO POOLING OF RESOURCES; EACH COLLECTS 30 FOOD INDEPENDENTLY, WORKING FOR HER OWN FAMILY OR FAMILY GROUP.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

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The division of labour between the sexes is stressed in Arnhem Land social life and technology.

Plate 10. A man of the Wessel Islands making a rope of *bulgut*, the fibre of *Brachychiton paradoxum*.
(Compare Plate 11 overleaf)

[Facing p. 74]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
O117 Murngin O117

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AT YIRRKALA

Yulengor clearing land for gardens

142
342
516
283

WET-SEASON HUT OF BARK SHEETS

The woman is making string from bark fibre

[facing p 23]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17

cicatrix across his chest. These raised shiny ridges stand out like cords, and once they have healed they seem to cause no inconvenience. Clay is rubbed into the wound so that it will heal slowly, and the mutilated flesh becomes a raised ridge. Men with sufficient vanity treat any accidental wound in this manner, and produce broad, irregular raised areas and cicatrices over their bodies. The Stone Age warrior is proud of his cicatrices and regards them as a form of beauty. Burramurra told me that they are a sign of manliness, and added: 'When women see a man with rows of long thick cicatrices across his chest they are attracted by the glamour.'

Arm-bands are woven from split cane and string and are adorned with opossum fur or birds' feathers; everyone seems to wear from one to a dozen of them. Cane armlets are the most common; they are tight fitting and are usually worn till they fall to pieces. Men's muscles swell round them; as children grow, armlets become so tight and painful that they chafe the skin and have to be cut away. Mothers and fathers decorate their children with armlets and string corselets, which are said to prevent illness and sores.

Vast quantities of string and rope resembling raffia are made from the inner bark of several trees. Varieties include string as fine as cotton, fishing-lines, rope for turtle and dugong harpoons, and two-inch cable for mooring canoes. In the making of string it is a common sight to see an old man squatting in the sand and pulling the hairs off the inside of his thigh and then picking out three fibres of bark and spreading them on his hairless thigh. With a hand on the fibres he rolls them toward him and finally with a quick thrust of the wrist he reverses the action and rolls them forward, uniting them into a single string. Fresh fibre is added as required, till in about an hour fifty or sixty feet of uniform string is completed. Harpoon and heavy ropes are

783 made on the same principle. Three men each take a length of fibre. They twist them and pass them one to another to form a single length of rope. As the rope lengthens it is passed over the limb of a tree and held taut by a fourth man.

286 415 [237] [531] Woven pandanus dilly-bags are pleasing and effective examples of artistic workmanship. Sacred bags are small, but beautifully woven, and are adorned with parrot feathers or fur and sometimes totemically painted. Women make most of them and some are so closely woven that they hold water. The majority, however, are large work bags which hang down their backs and are used to carry yams, shells, roots, and small animals. Another bag is made from string, is similar to the well-known onion bag, and will hold thirty or forty pounds of yams.

292 285 293 [513] The curious 'nganmara' is peculiar to Arnhem Land. It is a house, an umbrella, a garment, a shelter from the wind and rain, a mat on which to sleep, and it is conveniently carried under the arm. This conical straw umbrella mat is woven from pandanus palm; it is circular, with an apex two feet high, and gives some slight protection from sun, wind, or rain. When the nganmara is thrown open on the ground a woman and child can be completely hidden under it. I first saw an nganmara when I was on the King River, where the woman who had it was hunting with her friends. When I asked her to show me the mat under her arm, she calmly handed me the nganmara, which was her only clothing. Knowing that strangers were in the camp, some of the women had politely donned leafy twigs, but this lady relied on her nganmara and deftly swung it from under her arm.

276 [237] In west Arnhem Land, tobacco pipes are made from large crab claws. More elaborate pipes are also made by boring the pithy centre from a soft jungle shrub and plugging